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Letter dated 1 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement on the Middle East issued on 29 October 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean **De Ruyt**
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 1 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Middle East issued on 29 October 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Madrid Conference, the European Union feels it necessary to reiterate its conviction that the "peace-process" framework so laboriously worked out in the course of negotiations and agreements between the various parties constitutes the only reasonable hope of putting an end to a conflict which, if it continues, can only compound the sufferings of the peoples affected.

The situation in the Middle East is steadily worsening. Over the last few days, violence has reached a level not seen for many years. Distrust, fear and resentment are leading to radical polarization. The absence of any political prospects is fuelling further confrontation and playing into the hands of the extremists.

The European Union calls on the Israelis and Palestinians, immediately, without preconditions and while there is still time, to return to the path of negotiation on the basis of the recommendations in the Mitchell report and Tenet plan. It asks the Israeli authorities to withdraw their troops immediately from the zone that is exclusively under Palestinian administration (Zone A). It asks the Palestinian Authority to do its utmost to arrest those responsible for acts of violence against Israel.

In the course of the peace process, numerous stages have been completed, despite difficulties and obstacles of every kind. This has produced the elements of an agreement which it is necessary to preserve and, more importantly, bring to fruition, in particular:

- the principles of the Madrid Conference, in particular the principle of land for peace;
- United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973);
- the agreements signed by the parties, which have led to real results on the ground, and the progress made in previous negotiations.

In the present situation, the European Union calls on both parties to do their utmost, on the political, security, economic and social fronts, to return to the path of negotiation without prior conditions and with the objective of satisfying the legitimate expectations of the peoples in the region as expressed at the Madrid Conference in 1991:

- for the Palestinians, the establishing of a viable and democratic State and an end to the occupation of their territories;
- for the Israelis, the right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.